

The Commissioner's REPORT

New Jersey
Transportation
Highlights

Governor
James E. McGreevey

August 2003

Commissioner
Jack Lettiere



Commissioner of NJDOT unveils Governor James McGreevey's \$50 million dollar Sign Renewal Initiative to make all NJ signage more clear, concise and consistent on July 29. With him are Assemblywoman Bonnie Watson-Coleman, Trenton Mayor Douglas Palmer and Freeholder Brian Hughes.

IMPROVING QUALITY OF LIFE

Governor's \$50 million sign initiative kicks off in Trenton

Providing New Jersey motorists with highway signs that convey clear, concise, consistent and "smart" information was one of the tasks Governor McGreevey assigned the NJDOT earlier this year.

We got the initiative rolling in July by announcing a five-year, \$50 million program to improve signs along the interstate and state highway systems.

The program not only will reduce motorist frustration and inconvenience, it will improve safety by providing motorists clear direction as they approach busy interchanges. I kicked off the program in Trenton at the Route 29 Capitol Complex as NJDOT crews started changing overhead signs.

Over the next five years, the NJDOT will expand its scope and spend \$50 million to reduce sign clutter, upgrade

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and replace worn signs, add and replace overhead signs and redo pavement markings in an effort to improve highway operation and safety throughout the state.

Established in February, Governor McGreevey's Sign Review Initiative initially focused on the Route 29 Capitol Complex where old signs were replaced with clearer directional signs that allow motorists to easily and efficiently navigate what was once a confusing set of exit ramps.

Utilizing state-of-the-art equipment, NJDOT is able to capture digital images of highway signs from a specially-equipped van. That information is later downloaded to computers and analyzed by staff to help them develop corrective measures.

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STRETCHING 'FIX-IT-FIRST' DOLLARS FURTHER

NJDOT launches new Pavement Management Program

The NJDOT is meeting Governor McGreevey's mandate to make our tax dollars stretch further and to work more effectively with the launch of a new Pavement Management Program.

The NJDOT will award \$120 million of new contracts by the end of next June to rebuild and repave state highways, including the new Pavement Management Program, in order to get the most out of our capital dollars.

Over a billion dollars could be spent every year for the next 10 years to address the state's paving and resurfacing needs. But lacking that level of resources, the NJDOT must think creatively to make our existing budget do more.

The Pavement Management Program is one solution. Studies from other states have demonstrated that a dollar spent today on preventive treatments can save anywhere from \$3 to \$10 down the road in major reconstruction and extend pavement life by up to 10 years.

Through computer analysis, the Pavement Management Program will indicate what treatment is required and at what time. As a result, by applying the right treatment at the right time, we are getting a longer lasting highway costing less money.



This is an example of government at its best. Pavement may not be glamorous but this plan is

progressive, innovative and efficient. The plan also is a prime example of Governor McGreevey's "Fix-It-First" philosophy: repairing our existing highways, rather than subsidizing sprawl by building new roads.

For motorists, that means not only smoother rides, but avoiding future traffic jams created by major road reconstruction work. Eliminating potholes and rough surfaces reduces wear and tear on vehicles and the need for costly repairs. But most importantly, these improvements will result in safer roads.

Our pavement management program has been employed on I-295 near Route 1 in Mercer

County with excellent early results. Significant portions of 20 state highways, such as Routes 1, 3, 9, 30, 47, 70, 130, 206 and I-78 will receive this treatment, along with shorter stretches of other highways. In addition to this work, we will continue with traditional reconstruction and resurfacing work on our interstates, such as I-80, I-78 and I-95, and on our older state highways, such as Routes 46 and 206.

LOCAL PROPERTY TAX RELIEF

NJDOT delivers \$11.7 million in local aid

Providing property tax relief is one of Governor McGreevey's chief priorities. The NJDOT has delivered \$11.7 million in relief to 30 municipalities with the award of Transportation Enhancement grants ranging from \$200,000 to \$1 million.

The federally funded grants, which are administered through the NJDOT's Local Aid Program, enable municipal governments to minimize their use of property tax dollars to undertake critical infrastructure projects. In many cases, projects would not be built if it were not for the grants.

Including state and federal funding, a total of \$260 million in Local Aid support for counties and municipalities was provided in Governor McGreevey's

new budget.

The Transportation Enhancement grants fund projects such as streetscape improvements, road repaving, pedestrian and bike path projects, and transit improvements. One of the new grants was awarded to Waterloo Village in Sussex County to restore a section of the Morris Canal.

The largest grant was awarded to South River to construct a pedestrian walkway and bike path along the borough's riverfront. The project will utilize an abandoned railroad track bed.

Bloomfield Township was awarded \$750,000 to rehabilitate its train station and Bound Brook was awarded \$250,000 to help restore its train station area.

IMPROVING HIGHWAY SAFETY

McGreevey signs 'Safe Corridors' into law

Governor McGreevey has achieved another major legislative goal with the enactment of his comprehensive "Safety First" initiative, a bill that authorizes the NJDOT to designate "Safe Corridors" in New Jersey. More than 700 New Jerseyans lost their lives last year due to highway accidents, prompting the Governor to seek sweeping changes.

The new law authorizes the Commissioner of Transportation to designate segments of state highways as "Safe Corridors" based upon accident rates, fatalities, traffic volume, and other highway traffic safety criteria. Fines will be doubled for motor vehicle violations, such as speeding and reckless driving, committed within the corridors. The initial corridors include:

- Route 1 between Lawrence and South Brunswick, and between South Brunswick and Edison
- Route 9 from Lakewood to Sayreville
- Route 22 between Branchburg and Newark
- Route 40 between Hamilton and Egg Harbor
- Route 46 from Netcong to West Paterson
- Route 47 in Millville and Vineland
- Route 73 between Voorhees and Maple Shade
- Route 206 through Montgomery and Hillsborough.

In addition, the law increases fines for out-of-state overweight trucks and requires truckers to complete a special driver education class to restore a suspended

Commercial Driver License (CDL). Half of all "Safe Corridor" fines collected will be deposited in a new Highway Safety Fund. To be used exclusively for highway safety projects and programs, funds will be made available to State Police and municipal police departments for education, enforcement, and related measures that foster highway safety.

Governor McGreevey also released the final report of the Route 1 Safety Impact Team which contains short- and long-term recommendations for improving the safety of a 10-mile stretch of Route 1 in Mercer and Middlesex Counties. The team is a first-in-the-nation collaborative effort between state and federal officials.

The Governor announced \$3 million in short-term improvements to Route 1 that will include upgrades to traffic signals, installation of new, larger signs, new pedestrian crosswalks and enhanced pavement markings.

The NJDOT has taken other steps in the Safety First campaign of "education, enforcement and engineering" initiatives, including actively promoting the #77 Aggressive Driver Hotline statewide; expediting the installation of 100 miles of safety barriers; allocating \$20 million for engineering and technological highway improvements; adding 500 miles of raised pavement reflectors over the next two years; recording public safety announcements; and expanding driver education programs.



Governor McGreevey advanced his comprehensive "Safety First" initiative by signing A3527 into law, a bill providing for the designation of "Safe Corridors" in New Jersey. The new law authorizes the Commissioner of Transportation to designate

segments of highways under the jurisdiction of the Department as "safe corridors" based upon accident rates, fatalities, traffic volume and other highway traffic safety criteria. Fines are also doubled for certain motor vehicle violations committed within the corridors.

Governor's sign initiative Continued from front page

Other hotspots statewide that will be reviewed and improved include:

- I-80/Routes 46/23 Interchange
- Newark Liberty Airport
- the I-78/Route 24 Interchange
- I-95 and I-295 from the NJ Turnpike to Pennsylvania
- I-76 and I-676 along the Camden waterfront
- the I-287/Route 440/Route 1/NJ Turnpike and Garden State Parkway area (known as the Woodbridge Spaghetti Bowl)
- the Route 130 Collingswood Circle.

In addition to the NJDOT, the task force includes representatives from the State Police, the Office of Highway Traffic Safety, the Federal Highway Administration, the toll road authorities, the AAA and the NJ Motor Truck Association.

In his Executive Order 43, Governor McGreevey also directed the NJDOT to utilize technology to provide motorists real-time traffic information. Through a contract with SmartTraveler, the NJDOT is feeding 80 live video images of major intersections onto its Web site. Real-time traffic updates on the Web site will be phased in through October.

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